REASONS

FOR

Extending the MILITIA ACTS

TO THE

DISARMED COUNTIES

OF

SCOTLAND.

EDINBURGH:
Printed for GAVIN HAMILTON and JOHN BALFOUR.
MDCCLX.

[Price Three Pence.]

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MAY, 28, 1913
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REASONS

FOR

Extending the MILITIA ACTS to the diſarmed Counties of Scotland.

IT is with the utmoſt pleaſure I find perſons of all ranks agree in opinion, concerning the expedience, and even neceſſity of raiſing a militia in Scotland. That nation has not of a long time more juſtly diſcerned her true intereſt, nor taken more ſpirited and effectual meaſures to promote it. Though my way of life has, of late, led me a good deal into the world, and, by that means, afforded me frequent opportunities of hearing upon this ſubject the ſentiments of ſome of the moſt enlightened, as well as moſt uncorrupted of my countrymen; yet I ſcarce have heard one ſolid objection to the ſcheme. The few objections urged againſt it deſerve not the name of arguments, but are rather ſtrained and far-fetched pretences, invented merely to juſtify the oppoſition of thoſe who are predetermined againſt it, but predetermined by ſe-

cret motives, too baſe and ſordid for them to avow.

One objection however I muſt except from this number, becauſe it has been frequently urged by ſome gentlemen, of whoſe integrity and love of their country I am well aſſured. It is this.

Will it not be dangerous to train to the exerciſe of arms, the inhabitants of thoſe counties diſarmed by act of parliament, upon account of their known diſaffection to the preſent royal family? What proofs are there of their principles being changed? or what ſecurity have we, that, when provided with arms, and taught the uſe of them, they will not again rebel, and once more attempt to ſubvert our liberties and government?

This argument has little weight with me, who am thoroughly acquainted with the ſentiments of the diſarmed part of Scotland; yet, as it ſeemed to ſtumble the gentlemen who uſed it, and may perhaps make ſome impreſſion upon others, I ſhall ſuggeſt ſome few facts, which I flatter myſelf will weaken, if not totally deſtroy its force. This opens a field of very important inquiry, which demands to be diſcuſſed at ſome length; I hope, therefore, the reader will pardon me ſhould I detain him longer than either he or I could wiſh. I addreſs myſelf only to the ſerious and inquiſitive. The ſubject is of great import-

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ance, both to the honour and ſafety of the united kingdom; and, without aiming at wit or indulging ſatire, I ſhall deliver my ſentiments concerning it with the utmoſt plainneſs.——I ſhall endeavour, in as few words as poſſible, to ſhew, *firſt*, That though the late rebellion broke out in the diſarmed counties, yet even then the diſaffection of theſe counties was not ſo general as is commonly believed. And, *next*, That the meaſures purſued by the government ſince that time, have almoſt totally eradicated any remains of that principle; and that arms may as ſafely be truſted in the hands of thoſe living north of the Tay, as of the inhabitants on the ſouth of the Tweed, or of the Trent.

In ſupport of the firſt aſſertion, we have only to conſider how many men the northern counties contain, and then to remember how few of theſe roſe in arms in the cauſe of the pretender.

The diſarmed counties, as they are equal in number to thoſe indulged in the uſe of arms, ſo, without exaggeration, it may be ſaid, they equal them in populouſneſs. They comprehend the greateſt, and, if we except Edinburgh and Glaſgow, the beſt inhabited part of Scotland. The number of people in this kingdom, at a moderate calculation, exceeds 1,200,000; and as a fifth part of theſe are commonly conſidered as able to bear arms,

there are in Scotland, by that computation, above 240,000 fighting men, and conſequently 120,000 in the diſarmed part of it.

Now let us ſee how many of theſe followed the ſtandard of rebellion. The pretender landed about the middle of July, and, notwithſtanding the hopes of future rewards, the proſpect of preſent plunder, and the aſſiſtance of ſeveral chiefs of clans, at the battle of Preſton, fought Sept. 21. his whole train, for it deſerved not the name of an army, did not exceed 2500 men; and even this handful contained many, whoſe chiefs, by burning their houſes, carrying off their cattle, and other acts of violence, compelled them to take arms. So that of 48 fighting men, one only engaged in rebellion. 'Tis true, the army of the pretender increaſed conſiderably after that victory. But this acceſſion, excepting a few clans, conſiſted of men offering themſelves promiſcuouſly from all quarters; men, who engaged not ſo much from diſaffection as a love of novelty; many indeed from the deſperate ſtate of their private affairs, the very dregs and refuſe of mankind, of which every country unloads itſelf annually into whatever armies levy recruits in it; not to mention the crouds of giddy and thoughtleſs people, who, without inquiring into the juſtice of the cauſe, are ever ready to flock round a victorious ſtandard.

Whoever is acquainted with the temper of the

the Scotch nation, knows, that, in times of faction or rebellion, the inhabitants of that country are ſeldom either neutral or cool. Every man takes a ſide with keenneſs, and does not remain an inactive ſpectator of thoſe events by which the fate of his party is decided. Thus for every man ſo much attached to the cauſe of the pretender as to take up arms for him, the diſarmed counties contained at leaſt forty-eight zealous adherents to the preſent government. The ſucceſs which for a long time attended the rebellion, was not a proof of the ſtrength or valour of the rebels, but of the impotent condition of their opponents. For had the friends to the government been as well provided with arms as its enemies, the rebellion had been ſtifled in its infancy, and had never grown that gigantic monſter which afterwards appalled all England, and ſhook the foundations of the Britiſh throne.

I have often heard Engliſhmen talk, as if all the diſarmed counties were diſaffected, and their whole inhabitants attached by intereſt or principle to the pretender; nor was I ſurpriſed to hear this from them who have little acceſs to be acquainted with this part of the kingdom. But it fills me not only with aſtoniſhment, but indignation, when Scotchmen utter the ſame ſentiments. They, at leaſt, ought to know their own country. The diſarmed counties are Perth, Kincardine, Aberdeen, Inverneſs, Nairn,

Nairn, Cromarty, Argyle, Forfar, Banff, Sutherland, Caithneſs, Elgin, Roſs, and part of Stirling and Dumbarton ſhires.

Let us take a view of theſe, *firſt*, as ſeparate counties, in order that we may diſcover, whether they ought, without diſtinction, to be branded with the infamy of diſaffection or not; and with regard to them I ſhall affirm nothing that is not notorious to every Scotchman. The lower part of Stirlingſhire, which is the moſt fertile and populous part of that county, is inhabited wholly by Preſbyterians of the moſt zealous kind. And the ſame may be ſaid of the low country of Perthſhire. And among the northern counties, Elgin, and the moſt conſiderable part of Roſs, are diſtinguiſhed for the bigotted attachment of the people to the Preſbyterian form of worſhip. It is well known, that in Scotland a Whig and a Preſbyterian almoſt convey the ſame idea, ſo ſteady and unſhaken have the profeſſors of that religion always been in their loyalty to his Majeſty and the preſent government. The large county of Argyle has often given proofs of the ſame loyal principles. Few private men from the low country of Aberdeenſhire joined in the late rebellion; and it was owing to the influence and example of a ſingle man, rather than the general diſaffection of the county, that the ſame obſervation cannot be applied to the gentlemen of it. The ſhire of Sutherland has been

been long diſtinguiſhed for its loyalty. Not to tire the reader with a long enumeration of particulars, we may affirm, (nor can any perſon who has had proper means of information contradict the aſſertion), that there is not one of the diſarmed counties, in which there will not be found many gentlemen of undoubted attachment to the preſent government, who are both qualified and willing to act as militia-officers. And I aſk the moſt ſcrupulous and timid of thoſe who oppoſe the meaſures for which I contend, if he can deviſe any expedient more effectual for adding authority and weight to the cauſe of Whiggiſm, than the placing ſuch gentlemen at the head of the armed force of thoſe counties?

There is another method of diſcovering the temper and diſpoſition of the diſarmed counties, particularly of the Highlands; and that is, by taking a view of the different clans. Nothing will be more ſurpriſing to an Engliſhman than to be told, that the moſt conſiderable of theſe are now well affected to the preſent government, and that ſcarce one of them is in ſuch a ſituation as to become formidable to it. Nothing however is more undoubtedly certain. The Campbells, the moſt numerous, the moſt wealthy, and the moſt powerful of all the Highland clans, have always been eminent for loyalty; they derive their lineage from a family more uniform in its attachment

to the intereſts of liberty, and which has ſuffered more in that glorious cauſe, than any other in Great Britain. A younger branch of that name holds of a Nobleman, whoſe loyalty to the preſent government is undoubted, and who enjoys conſiderable employments under it. The Grants, a numerous clan, have been uniformly loyal. The Macleods, during the late rebellion, took arms in defence of the government, and were uſefully employed in its ſervice. Every thing that becomes a virtuous man and a loyal ſubject, may be expected from the education and good qualities of the young chieftain of the Macdonalds. The Mackays, the Monroes, and the Sutherlands, have always been diſtinguiſhed as much for their loyalty as their bravery.

Diſaffection ſeems therefore only to be lurking among thoſe few clans who engaged in the late rebellion. Even among them, I will venture to affirm, though it may ſeem a paradox, there were many neither tainted with diſaffection, nor diſpoſed to revolt. Ignorant, ſlaviſh, and uninformed, they drew not their ſwords in the cauſe of the Pretender, but of their own chieftains; nor from any diſguſt conceived at the old form of government, or hopes of bettering their condition under a new, did they aim at ſubverting it, and erecting another in its ſtead; but they blindly followed their leaders, the chiefs of their name,

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to whoſe will they had, from their earlieſt years, imbibed a blind ſubmiſſion. Accordingly we may obſerve their conduct varied and ſhifted, now for and now againſt the government, according to the whim or principles of their chieftains. The Fraſers afford a ſtriking inſtance of the juſtneſs of this remark. That clan, in the rebellion 1715, were in arms on the ſide of the crown; in the late rebellion they remained long quiet and undetermined, till their crafty maſter, ſeduced by the allurements of a promiſed dukedom, called them forth to join the pretender; and the ſame clan, nay, the ſame individuals, are now fighting his Majeſty's battles in America.

I beg leave to add one circumſtance more. The Popiſh religion, the moſt natural and the moſt powerful motive of diſaffection and rebellion, is by no means of extenſive influence in Scotland. The whole number of Papiſts in that kingdom does not amount to 20,000. A good number of theſe are to be found in Nithſdale and Galloway, and other parts not within the limits of the diſarming-acts. Few gentlemen of the Popiſh perſuaſion have conſiderable property, or are at the head of many vaſſals. Other cauſes of diſaffection may be overcome; and where the people are generally Proteſtants, and even a great majority of them Preſbyterians, the charge of diſaffection cannot poſſibly be univerſal.

One obſervation more, and I have done with what I have to ſay on this head. Certain principles of government grow at ſome times faſhionable, as well as certain cuſtoms and modes of dreſs; and it very often happens, that a lucky turn in the ſentiments of a people ſhall effectually introduce or explode principles, which government has laboured in vain to eſtabliſh or root out. Since political knowledge began to extend itſelf, and ſince the publication of ſome ingenious works in that ſcience, it is plain that the tide has run very high in favour of Whiggiſm, and attachment to the preſent government, the only principles that a man of ſenſe would not now-a-days be aſhamed to avow.

I ſhall now proceed to ſhew the efficacy of the meaſures purſued by the government, to extinguiſh every ſpark of diſaffection in the northern counties.

The political ſteps taken in conſequence of the laſt rebellion, were wiſe and prudent, and will reflect eternal honour on the adminiſtration which adviſed them.

To make men free, they clearly ſaw was the way to make them loyal; and therefore the parliament aboliſhed the hereditary juriſdiction of the nobility and gentry of Scotland. By this ſingle act, the lower people are freed from ſlavery and oppreſſion. Theſe courts where the judges were always ignorant, often partial,

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and moſt commonly indeed both judge and party, are now, thank God, at an end. A regular, equal, and eaſy adminiſtration of juſtice by ſheriff-deputes and their ſubſtitutes, is introduced in their ſtead. Beſides, by means of roads made through the Highlands, the ſentence of the civil magiſtrate receives prompt execution in the remoteſt corners of that wild country.

The abolition of theſe juriſdictions has alſo given a fatal blow to clanſhips; and as the people daily taſte the ſweets of freedom and independence, they, from a principle of gratitude, become daily more and more attached to the government to which they owe theſe bleſſings.

The next ſtep taken by the government was no leſs wiſe and politic, and ſtill, if poſſible, more humane. Not contented with making the Highlanders free, it wiſhed alſo to make them rich and induſtrious. The Highland eſtates forfeited to the crown by the rebellion of their proprietors, were not ſold for payment of debts, and purchaſed, as in other caſes, at an eaſy rate by the friends of the rebels: But the government diſcharged the debts from other funds; annexed the eſtates to the crown; and has appointed truſtees to apply their annual produce to the purpoſes of eſtabliſhing manufactures, of introducing a more rational ſyſtem of huſbandry, and training up the young people to ha-

bits of induſtry and mechanics. The eſtates themſelves are alſo divided into conſiderable farms, and conferred at an eaſy rent on ſuch of the inhabitants as are moſt diſtinguiſhed for loyalty, induſtry, and ſobriety. Who can doubt, if this gracious and humane conduct is ſteadily purſued, that, in a very ſhort time, even the name and memory of diſaffection will be forgotten?

It ſeems not to have been the intention of the diſarming-laws, to ſuppoſe any incompatibility between what they enact, and the employing of the militia in thoſe counties. For it is expreſsly provided in ſtatute, *Geo.* 1. *cap.* 54. § 6. That nothing in that law ſhall extend to hinder the lieutenants of counties, their deputies, the militia, and fenſible men under their command, to keep or receive arms out of his Majeſty's magazines, and to uſe them during the time that the militia and fenſible men ſhall be called out. Clauſes to the ſame effect are inſerted in the laws of the preſent King concerning this matter. From which it is obvious, that the parliament did not conſider the arming a regular militia in that part of the kingdom, as in any degree inconſiſtent with thoſe ends which it had in view.

Beſides, the diſarming-acts are not perpetual; they were only temporary expedients, and ceaſe to be in force at the expiration of ſeven years, to be computed from the 1ſt Auguſt 1753.

1753. It was foreſeen, that ſuch a change might be brought about in the ſituation of the country, ſuch events might happen as would render that precaution no longer neceſſary. Have not the wiſe meaſures taken by the adminiſtration produced that very change upon the diſpoſition of the Highlanders which was expected? Is it not the eſtabliſhment of a regular and well-diſciplined militia in Scotland, which will at once make our former precautions ſuperfluous? What rendered the Highlanders ſo formidable to the reſt of their countrymen? was it not becauſe they were accuſtomed in ſome degree to the uſe of arms, and retained the martial ſpirit in its full vigour, while the inhabitants of the low country were enervated by the arts of peace. In all ancient conteſts, the latter, as brave, and better armed and diſciplined than the Highlanders, maintained an evident ſuperiority. Will not the eſtabliſhment of a militia reſtore matters, in ſome meaſure, to their former ſituation? If they ſhall again be ſo deſperate and ungrateful as to take arms againſt the conſtitution, they will not pour down from their mountains, upon a country unguarded and defenceleſs; but will be encountered by men trained to arms, and animated with ſuch zeal for their King and country, as will prompt them to act with vigour.

But though the chance of a new rebellion in Scotland be ſo inconſiderable, that it can

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ſcarce alarm any perſon acquainted with that country; the gentlemen who have taken the trouble to prepare the plan of an act for extending the militia-laws to Scotland, have framed it with ſo much caution as to exclude almoſt the appearance of danger. By their ſcheme, the number of private men to be raiſed in Scotland, amounts to 6000; and the diſarmed counties may contain, as I have already obſerved, nearly one half of the whole inhabitants of that kingdom; they propoſe, that only 2199 men ſhould be raiſed in theſe counties. For my own part, I ſhould have had no apprehenſion of danger to the Proteſtant ſucceſſion, although one half of the whole number had been raiſed in the diſarmed counties. For there, I am convinced, private men as zealous, and officers as loyal may be found, as in any other corner of the kingdom. At the ſame time I cannot but commend the conduct of the committee, who, by their prudent diſtribution, have done much to quiet the fears of thoſe who have had little acceſs to be informed about the ſtate of the northern counties.

I ſhall conclude the whole of this diſſertation, already too long, by reminding you of the late conduct of the government towards the inhabitants of the diſarmed counties. I am far from condemning the jealouſy which has been entertained of them, or from cenſuring thoſe laws

laws which were intended to deprive them of the means of diſturbing the government. While the happy revolution brought about by King William, and the expulſion of the family of of Stewart, were recent events, and the paſſions of men remained in full vigour; ſuch ſuſpicions and precautious were both prudent and neceſſary. The effect, however, of theſe regulations, was not equal to the expectations of thoſe who deviſed them. The Highlanders were exaſperated, and not reclaimed; and, upon the ſlighteſt occaſions, reſorted to the ſtandard of rebellion. It is only by confidence that gallant men can be gained; and be it ſaid, for the honour of the age in which we live, we can aſcertain the truth of this maxim, not only from theory, but from experience. Our Sovereign generous, becauſe he is brave, his miniſters intrepid, becauſe they are upright, have embraced a meaſure long rejected by the timidity and caution of our former rulers; but long wiſhed for in Scotland by many perſons of the greateſt ſagacity, and of the moſt loyal principles. Since the commencement of this war, eight battalions, conſiſting wholly of Highlanders, have been raiſed. They are allowed to wear their own dreſs. The private men have been levied in thoſe parts of the country whoſe principles are moſt ſuſpected. The officers are all native Highlanders, or connected with that country. The heads of

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the moſt diſaffected clans have been truſted with the command of ſome of theſe battalions, and with commiſſions in them all. Not a few of theſe gentlemen bore arms under the pretender and his ſon in the laſt and former rebellions, and ſome of them were called directly out of the armies of France into the ſervice of Britain. How repugnant is the whole tenor of this conduct to the ideas of thoſe overſcrupulous perſons who object to the extenſion of the militia-laws to the northern parts of Scotland? What then have been the effects of this meaſure? Has the King's generoſity been abuſed? Shall his miniſters be taxed with raſhneſs, or do they merit the praiſe of prudence for arming this people, whom the gentlemen I oppoſe repreſent as unworthy that truſt? Let the world judge. In every action the Highlanders have not only done their duty, but have diſtinguiſhed themſelves. The ſame men who, fifteen years ago, threatened to overturn the conſtitution of their country, are now fighting in defence of its rights and poſſeſſions. Inſtead of aiding the arms of France, they are now employed in oppoſing them. By the confidence which his Majeſty has repoſed in them, they are from being rebels converted at once into good citizens; and what was formerly the weakneſs of Great Britain is now rendered no inconſiderable addition to its ſtrength. Nor is the ſalutary and reclaiming influence of

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the meaſures which I am applauding, confined ſolely to thoſe Highlanders who are already in arms. It extends to the whole body of that people; every man among them has now his chieftain, his brother, or at leaſt (according to their own phraſe) ſome one of his kindred, who has been honoured with the King's commiſſion, or who has entered into his ſervice. The effect of theſe connections is felt by all men; but among the Highlanders, their charm and operation is almoſt incredible. Every man among them is of courſe intereſted in the ſucceſs of the Britiſh arms: they muſt be ſolicitous about the glory and proſperity of their country, and cannot but wiſh well to a conſtitution, in defence of which their companions have drawn their ſwords, and to a King whom their friends have bound themſeves by a ſolemn oath to ſupport.

Shall then the laws concerning the militia be carried on in imitation of that extenſive and generous plan, the good effects of which we have ſo happily experienced; or ſhall they be circumſcribed by the ſcruples of timid and narrow-minded men? It is a maxim in domeſtic life, That to diſcover ſtrong ſuſpicions of a wife, or a ſervant, is the certain way to render the former unfaithful, and the latter diſhoneſt. The ſame holds in political government. The ſuſpicions and diſtruſt which former adminiſtrations diſcovered of the High-

landers, certainly cheriſhed their prejudices, and tempted them to rebel. Let them be treated as good citizens, and they will become ſuch. As the legiſlature has, by the wiſe laws I have already mentioned, communicated to them the privileges of freemen, and endeavoured to diffuſe among them a ſpirit of induſtry; let not the continuance of an invidious diſtinction fix upon their minds the impreſſions of being leſs truſted than the reſt of their countrymen. What Scotchman would conſent to a partial militia, by which thoſe brave men who have been ſo ſucceſsfully employed in defending us, are denied arms for their own defence? or could ſee, without indignation, half Scotland deprived of the benefit of this ſalutary law?

FINIS.